Glebe Community Development Project Evaluation

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**Background and Scope**

The Glebe Community Development Project is funded jointly by the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney and the Housing NSW. The project has been in operation in Glebe since 2004.

Commencing with funding from Housing NSW for one part time community development worker the project has grown with the addition of 3 year funding from the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney to comprise of 1 full time community development worker(with some management responsibilities for the Project) and one part time community development worker. In addition to this the staffing resources of the Project are regularly enhanced by students on placement. This enables the Project to achieve much more than is reflected in the resources allocated to paid staff only.

The project has focused on working broadly across the community in Glebe although a key element of the project work has been with Housing NSW tenants in Glebe and more recently in Camperdown.

This evaluation has been undertaken in order to review the past and current work undertaken by the project and develop directions and opportunities into the future.

The evaluation has been undertaken by Frazer Howard and Partners in response to the brief developed by the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney for an independent evaluation of the project.

**Methodology**

The methodology for the evaluation is qualitative and comprises three major components:

1. Review of documentary data connected with the project including reports, studies and other planning or monitoring documents.

2. Four focus groups – two of these were conducted with local residents, one with staff members from the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney who have played a management and support role in the project and one with local service providers who have been working with the project to develop a range of new initiatives. This group is known as the Glebe USYD Education Group.

3. Stakeholder interviews – a total of 14 interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders who either worked directly with the project or in relationship with the project.

A total of 36 people participated in the evaluation of which 14 were local residents and the remainder were service providers and staff from the project and from organisations, government and the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney.
Key Themes from the Evaluation

The report is organised around an examination of project strengths, outcomes, relationships and partnerships, challenges and future priorities/directions. This section examines key themes in each of these areas. Recommendations are provided at the end of the Report.

Overall Strengths

Overall, evaluation data from documents, focus groups and interviews revealed that the project has undertaken consistent and effective community development work that has been well focused locally in the Glebe community. In addition the project has provided a high quality context for student participation through placements, workshops and voluntary work in Glebe. The project has also created a range of opportunities for staff and students at the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney to engage with the community in which the University is located, and for community members and local organisations to better connect with the University.

The Project has been well documented since its establishment in 2004/5 with regular monitoring reports provided to funding bodies. This is the first external evaluation conducted of the Glebe Community Development Project.

Key strengths of the Project that emerged from the evaluation included:

Research and Research Training

The Project has enabled and supported the completion of a range of research projects as well as providing significant opportunities for student research and the development of research skills amongst both undergraduate and post graduate students at the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney. The interface between academic and practice contexts provided by the Project has played a key role in the development of research activities that are both practical and rigorous.

Examples of this research have been included as documentary evidence in this Evaluation Report. These are, Glebe: An Older Perspective November 2004, Men’s Consultation Glebe November 2006 (by Christian Albrecht), Glebe Facilities and Amenities Consultation November 2007, Glebe Community Development Project Strategic Plan 2008–2010 and Glebe Bytes Evaluation July 2009 (by Nicolle Macbeth).

In addition to this an Evaluation of the Concerned Older Women’s (C.O.W) Group, and Dissertation on Young People’s Understanding of Mental Health provide further examples of research undertaken as part of the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney Master of Social Work program that are embedded in the work of the Glebe Community Development Project.

Research collaboration between Project staff and academic staff from the Faculty of Education and Social Work is also a critical feature of the Project. One example of this type of
collaboration is joint publication of research such as De Pree–Raghavan, A and Rawsthorne, M 2007. Putting Community Development at the Centre: 'teaching' community development in a social work program. New Community Quarterly Vol 5 No. 2.

Research and research training activities in evidence in the Project enhance both the practical outcomes in all aspects of its work, and the valuable role played by the Project in relation to academic and practice research. The work of the Project in both developing research capacities amongst students and providing research opportunities, connections and collaborations for academic staff at the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney is of critical significance.

The research investment made by the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney through the Faculty of Education and Social Work Social Policy Research Network and Public Policy Network in the current Evaluation of the Project is further evidence of the crucial role played by research in the shaping of the Project. As part of this process the Project provides a context, focus and capacity for further inquiry and an ongoing research about a range of issues and questions.

Creating Learning Opportunities for Students and Community Members

There was consistent evidence of a unique role played by the project in connecting students and the Glebe community (particularly Housing NSW tenants) and providing a reciprocal learning environment for students, residents and workers. Examples of this included regular Social Work placements with the Project, the Glebe Workshop in which 3rd year Social Work students spent time in Glebe with input from Project workers and other organisations in the area, the Saturday Program co-ordinated through the Schools as Community Centres (SACC) project at Glebe Public School in which Education students participated as volunteers taking local children on outings and activities, the Pathways project developing an alternative education program for local young people who have become disconnected from school, University in a Day which provides an opportunity for local children and their families to spend time at the University, experience what it has to offer and address some of the barriers to access the University as is experienced by many local children in relation to the University despite its proximity.

There was evidence that the project has provided, via its networks, relationships and responsive listening to community members a rich context for student research training and learning. Experience for students that is embedded in a range of local initiatives and activities were reported as critical in the learning process. One student reported that her placement with the project enabled her to understand the day to day realities of disadvantage and how it can be addressed in a completely new way by experiencing “real conversations with real people rather than just assessing people, which I had done in previous placements.”

Residents also reported that the ongoing relationship with students as part of the Project had enabled them to take on roles as educators and develop their own skills and confidence in this area. It was clear that the involvement of students in the project was achieving both educational and community development outcomes over time.

Evaluation participants from a number of organisations working in the Glebe and surrounding areas also reported that the active participation of students in practical projects that involved local residents and had tangible outcomes in the area was a key strength of the project. These
participants contrasted this with other contexts in which they had witnessed students in roles as observers rather than active participants. They reported that in the Glebe Community Development Project the integral role played by students and the way this was facilitated by workers added significantly to the outcomes of the project and the learning experiences of students.

The University of Sydney as a Good Neighbour and Contributor

Both reports from evaluation participants and documentary evidence indicates that the project has enabled the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University to connect more effectively with the local community of Glebe and develop a useful place in the neighbourhood in which it is located. Students, local community members, organisations and agencies reported that through the work of the project the University is viewed as making a practical and valuable contribution in its own neighbourhood, and utilising it’s strengths as a learning institution to build capacities with community members, stakeholders and students in Glebe.

Collaboration within the University

The project has provided ongoing opportunities for collaboration and joint activities between members of Education and Social Work programs. The broad focus of the Project, its community development framework and its relationship with the University has meant that a range of collaborative opportunities have been developed between Social Work and Education. The most recent of these has been the development of the alternative education program in partnership with Glebe Youth Services, the Department of Education and a range of other stakeholders.

Length and Consistency of the Project Over Time

The relative longevity of the project (now running for 5 years) was seen as a key strength by residents and agencies who participated in the evaluation. The project was reported as having gained trust and credibility in Glebe as it had taken time to build relationships in the area and workers had focused their energies and resources into sustainable activities rather than attempting to spread themselves too thinly across too many areas. Securing 3 year funding from the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney was seen as a critical factor in this as it enabled the Project to operate with some certainty and for outcomes to take shape in a context of ongoing and trusted relationships. The presence of the Project in the area overtime was reported particularly by Housing NSW tenants and other community members as important. A number of residents reported that while some things came and went the workers from the Community Development Project were there for the longer term and had been able to assist in growing local activities such as the Mitchell St Fair and Concerned Older Women’s Group activities in a way that would not have been possible in a shorter time frame.

Independent Co-ordination and Catalyst Role Played by the Project with Local Organisations and Agencies

There was evidence that the role of the project as a relatively independent player in Glebe enabled this co-ordination and catalysing work to be done efficiently and effectively by project workers. A key factor reported here was the involvement of the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney in funding and supporting the project. A number of workers who participated in the evaluation reported that if the project were funded solely by Housing
NSW or from another government department, the perceived independence would have been compromised. They reported that the partnership between the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney and Housing NSW with regard to funding the project was a strength enabling a broad buy in from a range of stakeholders in Glebe.

**Action and practical orientation of the project**

There was consistent evidence that this has enabled strong relationships and credibility to develop between the Project and the local community. Both residents and workers in the area, as well as University staff emphasised the practical focus of the project and the willingness of project staff and students to take a hands on role in local projects without taking over. A number of participants in the evaluation reported that the Project worked very effectively to achieve practical outcomes for the community. One participant said, “I go to a lot of meetings where its all talk or someone has an idea but it goes nowhere. The workers at the Community Development Project always seem to follow through. They make things happen and connect people together to get stuff done. It’s been really important here is Glebe.”

**The local focus for the project**

This was reported as a strength by a number of stakeholders, particularly in relation to its role in partnerships with local government. While local government and other community development focused roles cover a much wider geographic area, the local focus of this project was reported by interviewees and focus group participants as unique and critical in connecting the concerns and ideas of local residents with the wider strategic focus of other organisations working in Glebe. Development of practical and strategic partnerships with local government and other organisations were reported as crucial in developing local projects and enabling voices of local residents to be heard more effectively.

**Making Space for and Encouraging Residents in Leadership**

This was particularly demonstrated with the Concerned Older Women’s group who reported that working with the project staff and students has enabled them to develop skills and confidence in advocating effectively on issues that impacted on them. Residents who participated in the evaluation reported that workers encouraged them to take leadership roles in activities and projects acting as facilitators in the process and setting clear boundaries regarding what they would do and what residents could do to drive a project. One resident commented, “Ali and Bec never take over. They tell us all the time that we have the power to do things ourselves and they walk along with us and encourage us to take on new things.” Residents reported a number of local advocacy projects they had taken on ranging from negotiating with the shopping centre on Broadway for the use of shopping trolleys to carry their shopping home, to a change in bus connections along Glebe point Road, to the organisation of the Mitchell Street Fair. The role played by the Glebe Community Development Project in enabling and encouraging confidence and leadership with local residents over time was reported by residents and representatives from organisations as a significant outcome of the project.

A further example of this was reported in the Computer group activity that is based in the Old Fire Station. Residents reported that they had been able to develop skills and confidence in working with computers as a result of this group and the role played by the Glebe Community Development Project as facilitators and supporters of it. Workers from agencies in the area also
reported this as a key outcomes, stating that in the past they never communicated with residents via email, but since the Computer Group started and people gained skills, they now regularly receive feedback and questions via email from Housing NSW tenants in the Glebe area.

**Local Network Development**

There was consistent evidence from documentary and interview evidence of the critical role played by the Glebe Community Development Project in the development and facilitation of local networks such as Forest Lodge and Glebe Co-ordination Groups (FLAG), local community groups such as the Concerned Older Women, Computer Group and Joanna O’Dea residents group. Evaluation participants reported that the perception of the Project as a neutral player in the area and the work it had done in developing a diverse array of local relationships were key factors in the success of its work in this area. One participants said, “The Project has been so important for bringing people together in Glebe and getting things done that we often only talk about. They have credibility and people trust them locally because of what they do, how they go about it, and how long they have been around.”

There was also evidence that the Project has played a role in bringing together Housing NSW tenants and other Glebe residents in networks that have begun to build these relationships in the area. It’s work in actively developing relationships and partnerships between a range of groups and organisations as well as creating spaces and events such as the Mitchell Street Fair where a diversity of residents and stakeholders in Glebe could come together was reported in two thirds of interviews in the evaluation process.

While a number of those who took part in the evaluation raised an issue about the larger number of groups and networks in the Glebe area compared with surrounding areas, they suggested that the Project may have a role in the future in working with groups to connect and consolidate networks because of its strength in this area of community development work.

**Role in facilitating and supporting the Concerned Older Women’s Group.**

This group of local residents is supported by the Project to work on issues that emerge in Glebe. The relationship between this group and the Glebe Community Development Project has been vital in developing skills and capacities amongst Housing NSW tenants who make up the group, in providing a unique environment for students to learn about community development practice and to work directly with community members on practical local issues. These outcomes were reported by residents and other stakeholders in Glebe as resulting from long term relationship building, a framework that sought to encourage and build of the strengths and capacities of group members, and creating opportunities for members to develop their skills and confidence further in working on practical local issues that they cared about.

**Project Management, Relationships and Partnerships**

A critical element that was highlighted throughout the evaluation of the Glebe Community development Project was its focus on relationships and partnerships. Data from the evaluation
reflected both the project's strengths and challenges, particularly in the area of partnership development. Overall, the evidence suggests that the Project has made significant progress over the past five years to negotiate, develop and maintain both relationships and partnerships with a range of groups, organisations, agencies and individuals in the Glebe area. There were also a number of challenges and areas for further work highlighted during the evaluation process. This section of the report looks specifically at these relationships and partnerships, exploring what has worked well and where the areas of challenge for the future still lie.

The context in which the Glebe Community Development Project does its work is one that is criss crossed with relationships and partnerships. It was in exploring and discussing these that many of the key successes and challenges, as well as critical areas for future work, emerged during the evaluation process. For this reason the following section, although entitled “Relationships and Partnerships” also outlines the key challenges and priorities for the Project in coming years.

**Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney**

The relationship between the Glebe Community Development Project and the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney is a key funding and management related one for the Project. As the auspice and major funder of the Project this relationship operates both at a strategic and operational level across the range of activities and outcomes that form its focus. The significant investment made by the Faculty of Education and Social Work and the way in which that investment has been managed is of critical significance to the success of the Project to date.

**What Works Well**

Overall, evidence from the evaluation process indicates that for both the University and Project itself the opportunities, connections, research and practical outcomes for student learning and research training in the fields of Social Work and Education, academic staff at the University, residents of Glebe and other stakeholders in the area, were valuable and effective.

As the major funder of the Project, the outcomes in evidence for the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University, included research, research training, collaboration, student learning and an opportunity to engage effectively with a neighbouring community. For the Faculty, the strengths it has invested in the Project (in addition to funds) in terms of research knowledge, infrastructure, academic and other staff resources have enabled a range of opportunities for innovation and collaboration in research and research training to develop that is of a high quality and well connected with key social policy issues as they take shape in a local community.

There was a strong perception reported by evaluation participants that the involvement in and support of the Project by the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney provided a neutrality, credibility and sense of trust for the Project in the Glebe community that had enabled workers to engage with a wide range of community members and workers in the area. This is critical in creating a context for the University to engage in sustainable and effective relationships that enable ongoing research and research training that has been a hallmark of the Project to date.
The practical aspects of the relationship between the Project and the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney, with its connection to student placements, volunteering and student learning as well as supporting residents and working to increase access to the University was reported during the evaluation as a critical element in its success.

The longevity of the management relationship and the growth in support provided by the Faculty of Education and Social Work for the Project were also reported by a number of evaluation participants as positive and important for achieving the outcomes that the Project has over the past five years.

Challenges

Challenges for this partnership now and into the future centre around three key themes:

1. Operational and Management Issues

One of the major challenges faced by workers in the Project in relation to the relationship with the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney was the lack of a clear operational budget that could be managed by the Project Community Development Worker. While relationships between the Project and the University on operational matters were reported as positive, the uncertainties created by the financial management of the project (at an operational level) at the University rather than with the Project itself, emerged as a significant challenge in terms of the day to day management of the Project. The expenditure of significant personal funds by workers which then had to be claimed back from the Faculty on a number of occasions was highlighted as was the uncertainties about how much was available in the budget for expenditure on the project at particular times. The time taken to ascertain financial information and make operational decisions was also reported as problematic due to the centralised financial management of the Project within the University. The development of an operational budget for the project that could be managed locally with set delegations for expenditure was suggested as a way of addressing these issues and of improving administrative efficiencies for the Community Development Worker and the Project operations.

A second challenge raised during the evaluation process regarding the operational side of the Project was the need to clarify the management structure of the Project. While workers reported that the level and quality of management and professional support they received from academic staff at the Faculty of Education and Social Work was very good, the importance of having clarity with regard to line management of the Project (particularly if one of the staff managing the Project from the Faculty of Education and Social Work was away or unavailable) was raised as an issue for attention. It was suggested that this issue could be effectively addressed by establishing a clear line management process and contingency plan communicated to Project staff to ensure that those staff are able to gain clarification and respond quickly to high profile or crisis issues in the community where appropriate.

2. Strategic Directions, Monitoring and Evaluation

Another key challenge for the future for the Glebe Community Development Project in the context of its partnership with the University of Sydney is the development of a meaningful and achievable strategic framework for the Project over the next 3–5 years. This issue was
highlighted during the evaluation by a number of stakeholders in relation to both the partnership with Housing NSW and the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney. There is ample evidence from the documents, interviews and focus groups included in this evaluation process that the Project has undertaken a range of very effective locally focused community development and educational initiatives since its beginnings in 2004/5. What is also evident was that the Project has managed an ongoing tension in terms of the breadth and level of demands from the community and other stakeholders on its resources and that this has increased over time. The development of a clear and meaningful process for determining the priorities and focus for the Project over the next 3–5 years emerged as a critical question and one that is embedded in the relationship with the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney.

As part of this process, a number of evaluation participants raised the issue of monitoring and evaluation for the Project into the future. While all of those who participated reported that the current evaluation was an important milestone for the Project, they also suggested that a process for ongoing evaluation was crucial. A number of evaluation participants said that the development of a strategic framework and ongoing evaluation process for the Project would enable more effective articulation of the Project’s successes as well as its challenges, and would also clarify how and why a particular focus or allocation of resources was made. For many who raised this issue, the critical importance of a collaborative process in the development of the framework was emphasised. A strategic framework that is developed and owned by all the key partners in the Project that includes community priorities as a foundation, was seen as a central concern and the potential leadership role played by the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University in gathering key players and engaging them in the discussion was reported as a priority.

3. Integration of the Project in a University and broader context.

A final challenge for the Project in relation to its partnership with the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney is the way it is perceived and integrated with the wider engagement of the University with the broader community. While evidence emerged during the evaluation that the Glebe Community Development Project has played an effective role in bringing together staff in Education and Social Work faculties to engage with the community in Glebe, it was also evident that significant further work needs to be done for the Project to have a coherent and well understood identity within the wider realm of community engagement that the University is seeking to enact.

Interviews with Faculty staff and service providers/agencies in Glebe revealed that while some people had a clear understanding of the range of activities and issues covered by the Community Development Project, many of those interviewed knew only about the particular aspect of the Project in which they were involved. There seemed to be an important future challenge for the Project in developing its profile both within and outside the University as a coherent entity rather than a series of activities or sub–projects. The Project is playing a critical role for the University in modelling effective community engagement and there is an opportunity for this work to be articulated more clearly and integrated with other work the University is doing in this area.

**Future Directions**
Three priority areas based on the evaluation data for the future are:

♦ Establish an operational budget for the Project with delegations for expenditure assigned to the Community Development Worker

♦ Clarify line management and support lines between the Project and the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney including contingency plans when a quick response is needed when manager is away.

♦ Develop a clear and integrated identity for the Project that is connected with the wider activities and community engagement of the University.

**Housing NSW**

This partnership is a crucial one for the Project both in terms of funding (as the other funder of the Project along with the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney) and the focus of the project in working with local residents (many of whom are Housing NSW tenants).

All of those who took part in the evaluation raised this partnership as a key element, and a number of those interviewed or who took part in focus groups, highlighted the challenges in the partnership as well as they further work that was needed in this area.

**What works well?**

Some residents reported that having Housing NSW as a partner in the Project provided an important conduit and avenue for advocacy between tenants and the Department. They reported that for them it was important that the Project was independent from the Department but connected to it so workers were able to listen to tenants concerns and act as an ally in bringing issues to the table with the Department.

A number of stakeholders who took part in the evaluation reported that the partnership with Housing NSW worked well or not so well depending on the personalities involved and the role played by senior management staff in the Department with regard to the Project. These stakeholders said that there had been times when the partnership had worked well and these times were characterised by a good understanding of community development by Department staff at local and central office levels, and support for the project objectives at a management level in the Department. They also reported that recent developments at the Department were positive and they had started to see the partnership gaining momentum as well as being hopeful that this would continue into the future.

**Challenges**

A key challenge identified by a number of participants in the evaluation with regard to the partnership between the Project and Housing NSW was the ongoing buy-in, understanding of and support for the project and its work by the Department over time. A number of factors were identified that had been challenging in this area including staff turnover at the Department, varying levels of understanding of the community development focus of the Project by local and central office staff at the Department over time, and very recently the decision made to redevelop a site adjacent to Joanna O’Dea in Camperdown in which tenants had been negotiating
to develop a community garden. These issues were identified by a range of those who were interviewed.

Further challenges identified by those who participated in the evaluation were the irregularity of meetings/discussions between the Project workers, Faculty of Education and Social Work University of Sydney and Housing NSW, the need to develop a collaborative strategic framework for the project into the future that included Housing NSW and the University as well as Project workers. The importance of improved communication and understanding between Housing NSW staff on the ground in a range of roles, and the objectives and processes of the Glebe Community Development project was also considered a challenge to work on.

A final challenge that was highlighted during the evaluation was in relation to a community development project in the Waterloo/Redfern area funded by Housing NSW and the University of NSW. A number of evaluation participants mentioned this project, and had participated in the concurrent evaluation of that project as well as this one. While all of those who spoke about the Waterloo/Redfern Project emphasised the differences between the scope and focus of it and the Glebe Project and the importance of not comparing the two, they also suggested that there was an opportunity for greater co-operation, knowledge sharing and communication between the two projects to be developed further in the future. There were varying views expressed during the evaluation as to whether developing this connection was a role for Housing NSW as a funder of both projects, the respective universities, or the individual project workers in each project. The development of a process or mechanism for this relationship between the two projects to develop was reported by evaluation participants as an important element of future development for each project.

**Future Directions**

Four key areas were identified for future work on this partnership:

- Develop regular strategic discussions between Housing NSW, the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney and project workers for the purpose of planning, collaboration, feedback and understanding in order to strengthen this partnership.

- Develop a clear strategic framework for the Project that includes input and directions from all key funding and other partners including but not limited to Housing NSW, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney and project workers, in order to clarify expectations and focus for the Project into the future.

- Further engage with Housing NSW staff at a local and central office level in understanding of the Glebe Community Development Project, its outcomes and opportunities for further collaboration with the Department in the future.

- Explore and develop opportunities for collaboration and communication between the Glebe Community Development Project and the Waterloo/Redfern Project supported by the University of NSW.

**City of Sydney Council**

Relationships with Community Development and Customer Services staff at the City of Sydney
Council emerged from the evaluation process as positive and practical overall. Evaluation participants describe the relationships as long term and collaborative in nature.

**What Works Well**

Evaluation participants reported that what worked well about the relationship between the Project and staff at the City of Sydney were,

- The way in which opportunities for collaboration developed and were taken up by both parties,
- The effective collaboration between the locally focused Glebe Community Development Project and the City wide focus of Council’s community development work,
- The formal connections between Council and the project in terms of consultation and planning,
- The informal discussions and activities that developed particularly when the Project was co-located at the Glebe Town Hall with Council.

Evaluation participants reported that opportunities for joint consultation with the community provided important and complimentary connection between the Project and Council. Council workers reported that the local focus of the Project enabled a much closer conversation between Council and the community in Glebe which was not necessarily possible in area where no locally focused community development project existed. The Glebe project focus was clearly differentiated by participants from the community development work of Council with the Project’s work described as “grass roots” and “very local” where as Council’s focus was broader and more strategic across the local government area. No one who participated in the evaluation reported any duplication between the community development role of Council and that of the Project.

**Challenges**

The major challenge raised in relation to these relationships related to the demand on the Project and the resources available to meet this demand in the community. Council workers reported that they were able to work effectively with the Project and the only barrier to this work being expanded was the resources available to the Glebe Project.

**Future Directions**

Three priority areas based on the evaluation data for the future are:

- Continue to develop this relationship between the Project and Council as a priority
- Grow the profile of the Glebe Community Development Project across Council with the view to its inclusion in broad Council consultation and planning.
- Seek future opportunities for joint projects, activities and explore the possibility of co-location again.

**Glebe Residents – Housing NSW tenants and other residents**

The development of strong and long term relationships with Glebe residents has been a key focus
for the Project over the last five years. Data from the evaluation process reflects the success of this work particularly with older women and Housing NSW tenants in the Glebe community. There is also evidence that the Project has connected well with other residents in Glebe and played a role in bringing together local residents from Housing NSW and other accommodation. A good example of this is the Mitchell Street Fair which was developed as a local event for residents as opposed to the Glebe Fair which was seen by residents as a tourist event.

There was also evidence reported during the evaluation from the majority of those who participated, that significant future work was needed to connect with a number of other groups in the Glebe community and surrounds.

**What Works Well**

The time and approach taken by the Project workers in establishing positive and strong relationships with local residents, as well as facilitating and negotiating relationships between residents works very well. Linking these relationships with a range of outcomes from capacity building, education and skill development to advocacy, oral history and local events has worked very effectively in the Project. Everyone who participated in the evaluation reflected on the capacity of Project workers to connect with and develop trusting relationships with residents in Glebe.
The Project has established an important identity as a connector amongst community members and its work is recognised by residents across the socio-economic spectrum in Glebe. One resident who participated in the evaluation, and who had been active in the Glebe community over an extended period told us, “The work of the Community Development Project is not important in Glebe. It’s essential and all of us across the board in this community are benefiting.”

**Challenges**

The key challenge identified by most of those who took part in the evaluation was to broaden the number and diversity of people with whom the Project works. Continuing to support and facilitate groups that need ongoing assistance while stretching or reallocating resources to connect with new groups was reported as an ongoing struggle for the Project.

Critical groups identified by a range of evaluation participants as a priority for the project in the future were the Aboriginal community in Glebe, those with mental health issues and their carers and men. The area of health overall was identified by a number of evaluation participants as an important area of future focus with both the engagement of health agencies and the community on a range of issues as a priority.

The recent move into the Camperdown area was also seen as positive and challenging for the Project. Two key challenges here are

- ♦ The tense relationship between tenants and Housing NSW following the recent announcement regarding the development of homeless persons housing on a park adjacent to the flats which had been the subject of negotiation by residents for a community garden.

- ♦ The need for clarification of roles and further development of the relationship between the Project and the Tenant Resource Participation Service (TRPS). This relationship was reported as improving and further work was planned in this area by both Project staff and TRPS staff. (The TPRS is a service funded by Housing NSW to develop and support tenants groups amongst Housing NSW tenants. The geographical focus of this service is much broader than Glebe but includes tenants groups in the Glebe/Camperdown area. In this case the tenants group at Joanna O’Dea is one that TPRS support.)

**Future Directions**

Three priority areas based on the evaluation data for the future are:

- ♦ Begin a process of listening and engagement with the Aboriginal community in Glebe to determine how relationships between the Project and the community might take shape.

- ♦ Begin a process of listening and engagement with residents (possibly with a focus on men) living with mental illness and their carers to determine a possible role for the Project with these residents.

- ♦ Continue work with Joanna O’Dea residents listening and exploring how the Project can be most useful with this group.

**Local Organisations and Service Providers**
Those who took part in the evaluation reported consistently that the Project works very well with local organisations and services providers. Key partnerships with the Glebe Schools as Community Centre, Glebe Youth Services, Council, Hope Street Community Centre and relationships with the Glebe Society, Glebe Point Residents Group and other local community groups were all reported as positive and effective during the evaluation process.
What Works Well

The Project provides a credible and trusted local forum for bringing people together from various groups to address particular issues or engage in ongoing communication and collaboration. The development of the Forest Lodge and Glebe Co-ordination Group (FLAG) is a key outcome for the Project in this capacity.

A number of those who took part in the evaluation reported that the Project has been very careful and clear not to duplicate any work done by other organisations and has worked to support and facilitate local groups and organisations to build their own capacities through assistance writing grants and other support, rather than growing its own infrastructure. This attention to networks and capacity building was reported as essential in building local trust amongst service providers and community organisations.

Challenges

One challenge that was raised during the evaluation for the Project is the administrative pressure that can accumulate on a small Project through supporting, resourcing and facilitating a number of networks and groups. One comment was, “I was surprised how much administration there was to do with the Project. When I found out I wondered whether the Project offered to take minutes and do admin for other groups too much.” This tension is a key one for a small project such as the Glebe CDP with a focus on capacity building, and feeds into the need balance strategic priorities with practical assistance in the context of the kind of community development work that is the focus for this Project. This is an ongoing challenge for the Project.

Future Directions

The priority areas based on the evaluation data for the future are:

♦ To examine the role played by the Project in relation to supporting local groups and organisations to ensure it is providing effective support within its resources and focused on the outcomes of the Project.

♦ To continue its work in developing and expanding relationships with local service providers and organisations in line with its priority areas of focus over the next 3 years.

State and Federal Government Agencies

The partnership with Housing NSW has already been discussed but the relationship between the Project and other government agencies was also raised in a broader context throughout the evaluation.

What Works Well

Through the Pathways alternative education project and Saturday morning activities at Glebe Primary school, there was strong evidence that the Department of Education and Training and has been effectively engaged with a number of aspects of the Project.

Housing NSW has provided ongoing support for the Project over its life and although this partnership has been highlighted in the evaluation as an area for further work, this long term support reflects a strong level of commitment to community development with its tenants in Glebe. This was also reflected during evaluation interviews.
There was a strong partnership with TAFE NSW in evidence during the evaluation and this was seen by all of those involved as a positive and growing one with opportunities for joint projects into the future.

**Challenges**

A key challenge highlighted throughout the evaluation process by a range of stakeholders was the development of relationships, and potentially partnerships with other government agencies. Health was seen as a priority agency (or series of agencies) by a number of stakeholders for the Project to engage more actively with. Issues of mental health were raised consistently during the evaluation as a high priority and one where a community development approach in Glebe such as that used by the Project, was viewed having the potential for making a positive impact.

Another government agency where there is potential to engage more proactively is the NSW Department of Community Services. A focus on health issues and mental health particularly, which was highlighted by a number of evaluation participants provides a possible context for this engagement.

**Future Directions**

Three priority areas based on the evaluation data for the future are:

- Continue to engage actively with DET and TAFE to shape existing activities and develop new initiatives
- Proactively develop the partnership with Housing NSW and investigate opportunities for collaborative planning
- Begin a process of active engagement with Health and other relevant services and agencies in Glebe with an initial emphasis on Mental Health.

**Other Challenges and Future Directions**

Two further challenges and priority areas for the future emerged from the evaluation:

**Balancing the Demands of the University and the Community with Current Resources**

Maintaining the balance between responsibilities to students and to overall project goals was raised as an ongoing tension for the Project. It was evident throughout the evaluation that the current resources in terms of staff for the project are the minimum possible to achieve the outcomes for both students and the community. From the Faculty of Education and Social Work’s perspective the effectiveness, skills and experience of Project staff enable the placement of students who may need a higher level of support or who are facing significant challenges in their learning. This was reported as a valuable capacity but was recognised as one that took a higher level of time and resources in the Project from other areas. If this practice is to continue, an allocation of resources in recognition of the role would ensure that the Project overall, and particularly its work with residents, would not suffer in the future.

In addition to this, the Project has expanded over the past 12 months to work with Housing NSW tenants at Joanna O’Dea in Camperdown. Evidence gathered during the evaluation indicated that there was potential in this work to have a similar impact over time that the Project
has had with tenants in Glebe but resources are required for this work to expand. Additional staff resources would enable the project to play a similar role in Joanna O’Dea and with other specific communities and target groups that were identified in the evaluation as areas for future focus. Any reduction in staff resources would have a significant impact on the level and quality of work that is currently being undertaken by the project. Managing the demands of the Project as they increase and diversify will require planning and resource allocation that is both strategic and closely connected with the purpose of the Project over time.
The Profile of the Project

This issue has been mentioned in relation to the University, Council and other government agencies. It was raised by over half of those who took part in the evaluation. While evidence from the evaluation reflected that an awareness of different parts of the Project were widely known by residents and stakeholders, only a few of those who participated, could clearly describe the Project overall. Further development of the profile of the whole Project in a coherent narrative in Glebe and further afield was viewed by most evaluation participants as a priority for the future. A number of those who took part in the evaluation told us that the Project did a lot of work in Glebe that no one knew about, or that was unrecognised because its focus was on building local capacity. Describing and evaluating this work is a critical area for the future of the Project.

Recommendations

The recommendations are grouped with regard to their focus and drivers for implementation.

Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney and Housing NSW

♦ Review existing partnership arrangements with Housing NSW to strengthen planning, collaboration, feedback and understanding

♦ Develop a clear strategic framework for the Project that includes input and directions from all key funding and other partners including, but not limited to, Housing NSW, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney and project workers, in order to clarify expectations and focus for the Project into the future.

♦ Further engage with Housing NSW staff at a local and central office level in understanding of the Glebe Community Development Project, its outcomes and opportunities for further collaboration with the Department in the future.

♦ Explore and develop opportunities for collaboration and communication between the Glebe Community Development Project and the Waterloo/Redfern Project supported by the University of NSW.

Research and Training

♦ Consolidate and enhance the research focus and capacity of the project building on current research and exploring

♦ Develop further research possibilities and partnerships between the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney and the Project that build on the strengths of the project and offer connections with other similar projects in Sydney or further afield.

University of Sydney – Project Management and Operations

♦ Establish an operational budget for the Project with delegations for expenditure assigned to the Community Development Worker.

♦ Clarify line management and support lines between the Project and the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney including contingency plans when a quick response is needed when manager is away.
Develop a clear and integrated identity for the Project that is connected with the wider activities and community engagement of the University.

**Partnerships with Local Government**
- Continue to develop this relationship between the Project and local government as a priority.
- Grow the profile of the Glebe Community Development Project with local government with the view to its inclusion in broad consultation and planning regarding facilities, infrastructure, environmental issues and services provided by Councils.
- Seek future opportunities for joint projects, activities and explore the possibility of co-location with local government again.

**Priority Areas for Broadening Community Engagement in Glebe**
- Begin a process of listening and engagement with the Aboriginal community in Glebe to determine how relationships between the Project and the community might take shape.
- Begin a process of listening and engagement with residents (possibly with a focus on men) living with mental illness and their carers to determine a possible role for the Project with these residents.
- Continue work with Joanna O’Dea residents listening and exploring how the Project can be most useful with this group.

**Relationships and Partnerships with Government Agencies and Non Government Organisations**
- Continue to engage actively with DET and TAFE to shape existing activities and develop new initiatives.
- Begin a process of active engagement with health and other relevant services and agencies in Glebe as well as academics from the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney working in the area of health, with an initial emphasis on Mental Health.
- As a minimum continue current staffing levels in the project, and seek additional project funds from a range of sources to enhance and expand the work being done currently – this may occur through partnerships with other local organisations and/or an expansion of the project itself (particularly in relation to Joanna O’Dea).
- To examine the role played by the Project in relation to supporting local groups and organisations to ensure it is providing effective support within its resources and focused on the outcomes of the Project.
- To continue its work in developing and expanding relationships with local service providers and organisations in line with its priority areas of focus over the next 3 years.

**Project Profile and Sustainability**
- The Project seeks longer term funding (minimum of 3 years) from with the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney or another source to create some certainty for the Glebe community regarding the commitment of the Project into the future.
As part of the strategic planning process, identify opportunities for the further development of the project profile in Glebe and further afield to increase knowledge about and opportunities for the project into the future.
Appendix 1

Groups, Organisations and Agencies that Participated in the Evaluation were:

- Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney
- Glebe Community Development Project
- Housing NSW
- Hope Street Community Centre
- Concerned Older Women’s Groups
- Joanna O’Dea Tenants Group
- Glebe Society
- Glebe Resident’s Group
- Glebe USYD Education Group
- Glebe Schools as Community Centres
- Glebe Youth Services
- City of Sydney Council
- TAFE Outreach
- Tenants Resource Participation Service
Appendix 2

Glebe CDP Evaluation – Interview and Focus Group Questions

1. Tell me about your role and involvement with this project
2. What has worked really well in the Glebe CDP project from your experience and observation?
3. Tell me about the key overall outcomes from your perspective. How do you know about these outcomes?
4. What have been the major challenges in the project?
5. How have you seen and experienced these challenges addressed?
6. Who in the community, or amongst stakeholders is not around the table as yet, and why do you think that is? What has happened to bring a diverse group into the conversation of the project?
7. This is a community development project. Tell me about the most important elements of the project where community development has played a role and why
8. What have you learned from the project? What has been learned overall? How do you know?
9. Tell me about the relationships that have taken shape over the life of this project. What role have these played? What has assisted them in taking shape?
10. What has surprised you most about this project?
11. What would you do differently if you were redesigning the project?
12. How would you change the structures and systems to improve the project into the future?
13. Sustainability is always an issue in community projects. What works well for the long term impact of this project? What are the changes you would make in relation to sustainability?
14. Thinking about the objectives in the Strategic Plan more closely,
   1. What are some of the outcomes you have seen and experienced from this objective?
   2. What evidence have you seen of this objective during your work with the project?
   3. From your perspective what could be done differently in the future to better achieve this objective? What would you change?

Finally, thinking about the future of the project, can you describe three additional outcomes you would put into place to enhance the project, three challenges you see as priorities for the project to address and three strategies that would assist the project in achieving a long term
positive impact in Glebe for all those the project is working with.
Appendix 3

Project Outcomes

While a number of project outcomes have been discussed in the previous section it is important to briefly outline the key outcomes for the project overall that were clearly supported by evidence throughout the evaluation:

- Development, facilitation and support of strong and ongoing local networks – both formal as in the case of FLAG and informal networks with organisations and residents in Glebe, and more recently Camperdown
- Support and facilitation of the Concerned Older Women’s (COW) Group – a group of local residents living in public housing in Glebe
- Support and facilitation of tenants group at Joanna O’Dea, Camperdown
- Support and facilitation of Pathways alternative education project being developed at Glebe Youth Services
- Support and resourcing for Mitchell St Fair in partnership with community members and other stakeholders
- Support and resourcing of Glebe Bytes Project in partnership with a range of other local stakeholders and residents.
- Ongoing support, facilitation and resourcing for Social Work students through placements, workshops and research projects.
- Support for Education and Human Movement students in voluntary roles with Glebe Primary School via the Schools as Community Centres.
- Development of local community capacity building activities such as the Computer project and Glebe Bytes
- Establishment of strong and trusting relationships with residents and other stakeholders in the Glebe area
- Establishment of ongoing and practical relationship between the University of Sydney and its neighbouring community of Glebe.
- Partnership between Housing NSW and Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney to undertake a community development project jointly in Glebe
- Formal role as educators for student from the University of Sydney
- Support, encouragement and facilitation for local Housing NSW residents to develop and build on their skills and capacities, gain confidence and take on leadership roles in the local community.
- Joint consultation and other projects developed with City of Sydney Council.
- Partnership with DET and TAFE
Appendix 3

Documentary Review

Documents reviewed as part of the evaluation were:

- Glebe: An Older Perspective November 2004
- Men’s Consultation Glebe November 2006 (by Christian Albrecht)
- Glebe Community Development Project Report to Housing NSW from the University of Sydney 2004
- Glebe Community Development Project Reports
  - May 2004
  - March 2005
  - July 2005
  - March 2006
  - July 2006
  - November 2006
  - May 2007
  - August 2007
  - November 2008
  - March 2009
- Glebe Facilities and Amenities Consultation November 2007
- Glebe Community Development Project Strategic Plan 2008–2010
- Glebe Bytes Evaluation July 2009 (by Nicolle Macbeth)